

FAQ about the Advanced IMN Program

Current IMN state coordinator

Jody Heaston, IDNR State Parks and Reservoirs Volunteer Coordinator

Ouabache State Park, 4930 E. State Rd 201, Bluffton, IN 46714

Phone: 260-824-0926 Fax: 260-824-9402 Email: jheaston@dnr.in.gov (best way to contact)



Keep checking the IMN Graduates site for updates! <http://www.in.gov/dnr/parklake/6328.htm>

What is the Advanced IMN program?

To achieve Advanced IMN, one needs to complete a minimum of 30 hrs of volunteer time annually and 8 hrs of education time annually (training/workshops presented by IMN Hosts, city/county/state parks, or other natural resources agency).

Payment of an annual \$10 administrative fee of each year, automatically puts you as an Active IMN working toward the Advanced level. To accomplish the Advanced IMN, a minimum of 30 hrs of volunteer time plus 8 hrs of education time has to be turned in by December 22 of that year to receive the advanced certificate and pin. Payment can be made at any time of year but needs to be turned in by December 22.

Where do I submit my volunteer and education hours to achieve Advanced IMN?

Your 30 hours of volunteer time and 8 hours of education time (any type of Naturalist led, IMN class or county, city, state park nature program) need to be submitted by email to Jody Heaston by Dec. 22 of the year you wish to be considered for the Advanced level. All that is needed is to go to the IMN Graduates page and click on Jody Heaston's email. Email her your hours, name, address, host name and class year, a *brief description* of where you did your volunteer time and education time. It is that simple! We hope to have a database on the website in the future.

Do I need to turn in a volunteer hour sheet with signatures for my Advanced hours?

There is no need to turn in a volunteer hours sheet or get signatures. However, your original class host may also want to follow your progress. He/she might want you to send a copy to them for their records. Check in with that individual to see.

Can you explain the education hours?

Any of the Project WET, WILD, Learning Tree, etc. courses are great examples of education time. You may get your 8 hours of time in a variety of ways as long as you are a student advancing your learning and love of the environment. Many nature programs are offered though county, city and state parks too like Eagle days, spring wildflower hikes, lady bug house workshops, archeology days, fossil festivals, etc. Here is a link to the State Parks and Reservoirs special event calendar <http://www.in.gov/dnr/parklake/3282.htm>. Just contact the county, city, state park in your area for their list of programs and pick your favorites!

You can also sit in on a scheduled IMN class in the area as long as you contact the host to see if there is room for you. (You may be charged a small fee.) Some parks that have many volunteers offer training days, like tree hikes, importance of the park's archeology history, even leading preschool hikes. Those would work too for education time- again you are a student learning.

Webinars (not web videos) conducted by natural resources professionals/educators that are at least one hour in length will be accepted. A limit of 2 hours of webinars can be used for education time.

We do hope in future to offer education programs specific for Advanced IMN's. Those would be sent out over the listserv. Some sessions at the IMN Annual Gathering will apply toward Advanced training.

Does our IMN host have to approve the education choices?

Your education time or program choice does not have to be approved; however, if you have a question regarding whether it applies, please contact the coordinator.

What if I am helping a naturalist with an education program? Does that count for education time or volunteer time?

If you are helping a naturalist/park staff with a workshop, for example you are passing out papers/supplies, keeping track of attendance, showing people to the restroom, etc., then you are doing volunteer time because you are helping.

Where can I do volunteer time?

Volunteer hours apply to the same natural resource agencies or organizations as they always have, your host should have given you a list or some ideas of places in your area.

How do I keep updated on the Advanced Program?

Frequently check the IMN graduates website as it will be updated as the program develops. Make sure you are on the IMN email list (you can sign up from the IMN graduates website). Be a fan of the IMN facebook page. Don't be afraid to email IMN state coordinator questions.

Can I use a credit card to pay the annual \$10 fee?

Yes, the IMN money goes into the Indiana Natural Resources Foundation where it is kept for us. You will need to go to their donation site <http://www.in.gov/ai/appfiles/inrf-donations/> then in the box titled "In Honor/Memory of" put IMN annual fee.

If I took a class this year and became certified, can I still strive for Advanced IMN in the same year?

Yes, each student that completes a class and gets their initial volunteer hours in is automatically considered Active for one year since they paid the \$10 in their program fee. However, if that student thinks they can become Advanced by the end of the same calendar year and would like to strive for that then they would have to pay \$10. The initial \$10 goes for their first pin and certificate and mailing, etc. The next \$10 (for advanced) goes to the next pin, certificate, mailing and for future advanced program (hoping to start mini classes soon!)

Can an inactive IMN become active by sending in \$10 fee?

Yes, send the \$10 fee into state coordinator with a note stating you are becoming active.

Do you have specific questions about the Advance IMN program? Please email IMN state coordinator listed at the top of FAQ.